# Pulpit Preaching

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## Contents

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THE CHARACTER OF FAITH

The Source of Our Faith . . . . . 3
Ensworth Reisner

The Romance of Our Faith . . . . . 5
Frank A. Court

Behold! The Unbeliever . . . . . 9
John W. Meister

LIVING BY FAITH

Faith and Life's Unanswered Questions . . . . . 13
Rolland W. Schloerb

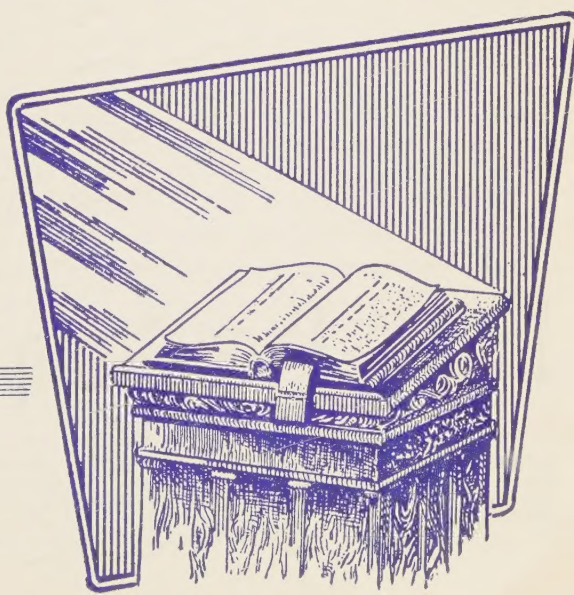
The Rhythm of Faith . . . . . 14
Harry H. Kruener

Lives Made Whole by Faith . . . . . 16
Gene E. Bartlett

On Wings Like Eagles . . . . . 18
Robert Bryce Sanford

A Magnificent Failure . . . . . 20
Wesley P. Ford

EXPOSITORY PREACHING AND THE PREACHER . . . . . 22
Leslie Conrad, Jr.



A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL
FOR MINISTERS

## Editorial Comments

This issue features the subject, "Faith," and includes two emphases, "The Character of Faith" and a "Living by Faith." A splendid article, thoughtful and challenging, on expository preaching has been written expressly for PULPIT PREACHING by Dr. Leslie Conrad, Jr., executive secretary of the Luther League of America, an affiliate of the United Lutheran Church.

Next month's themes will be "The Eternal Presence," sermons on man's quest for God, and "Varieties of Religious Experience," a series of four messages on Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter and Paul, by Dr. Theodore P. Ferris of Trinity Church, Boston.

The July themes will be "Adventures in Worship" and "Sermons from the Seashore," a friendly and delightful series by Dr. Lowell M. Atkinson, First Methodist Church, Englewood, New Jersey.

—o—

## Worth Quoting

The father [in the parable about the Prodigal Son] did nothing to keep the young lad at home. He handed over to him, without protest, the means he required to stray far and plunge his life into a course leading to destruction. When we read of this, the thought comes to mind, "How easy God makes it for us to sin!" God gives us freely of the means which we can use to put us far from Himself. It almost seems as if He willingly puts into our hands the material for a whole career of flagrant sin, and having done so leaves us free to make our choice.

He gives us minds that can think whatever thoughts we care to fill them with. He gives us bodies fearfully and wonderfully made, to control and to use exactly as we will. He gives us our wills, our emotional and instinctive natures and our talents, and He leaves us free to abuse them or use them as we decide. Such is the "substance" He

Continued on page 11

## Books For Pulpit Preaching

*Deep River* by Howard Thurman offers reflections on the religious insight of certain of the Negro spirituals. This book not only furnishes remarkable illustrative material on the meanings of the best-known spirituals, but it also presents in eloquent and thoughtful prose an attitude and perspective which, fortunately, has inspired all churchmanship. (Harper, 95 pp., $2)

A beautiful and helpful book, called to the attention of this reviewer by a PULPIT PREACHING reader, is *Christian Symbols in a World Community* by Daniel J. Fleming. Although it was published some years ago, its attractiveness has not been diminished. The author traveled extensively throughout the Eastern world to find the indigenous Christian symbolism and shows through splendid photographs and enlightening commentary the manner in which all peoples have contributed in their own ways to the universal art of the church. (Friendship Press, 150 pp., $3)

*Many Things in Parables* by the Scottish preacher, Ronald S. Wallace, is a series of first-rate expositions on the parables. Written in an engaging style, the book gets to the heart of the parables with a keen and refreshing interpretation. This is an excellent source for a pastor's handling of parables in the classroom or pulpit. (Harper, 218 pp., $3.)

*Christian Words and Christian Meanings* by John Burnaby of the University of Cambridge examines sixteen distinctive words (faith, revelation, love, incarnation, sin, forgiveness, sacrifice, among others) in their original, traditional and modern contexts and suggests their religious significance. The studies represent substantial content, clear and effective writing, well-selected illustrative materials and will become a companion to the preparing of doctrinal sermons. (Harper, 160 pp., $2.50)

A pertinent book for the current year is

Continued on page 11

Pulpit Preaching

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ENSWORTH REISNER
FRANK A. COURT
JOHN W. MEISTER

## he Source of Our Faith

ENSWORTH REISNER, First Methodist Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

*He is not God of the dead but of the living. — Matthew 22:32.*

"Isn't the growth of faith through religus experience a vague thing?" The questoner was a former Roman Catholic who as seeking to understand the authority of rotestantism. I explained, "The Roman atholic Church finds its authority in the gmas of the church and in the church elf with its hierachy. The Protestant urch finds its authority direct from God each individual through personal religious perience, through the religious experience the Christian community and through the ligious experience revealed in the Bible."

As we continued our discussion he said, When I'm in need of advice on health I go a doctor, an expert, and he tells me what do. Why shouldn't I be able to go to a rgyman and be told what to do to have ith?" I replied, "You can, for a clergyman an expert like a doctor. But like a doctor doesn't know it all. All he can do is adse you how to develop your own religious perience just as a doctor can advise you w to develop your own health. Health pends upon the individual. Salvation dends upon the individual's growth of faith rough religious experience."

Of course, this is vague, just as all things hich we must learn through life start out gue. They become definite and concrete our knowledge and experience grows. And should profit by the experience of others. he finest experience of man's faith has en recorded in the Bible. Our Lord, Himf, referred to scriptures time and time ain. The man who knows the Bible delops a faith possessing continuity with a st, a coherence with all human experience d a living objective for his faith. The ing objective is the perfection of Jesus rist.

The man who does not nourish his religis experience with the Bible starves his th. His faith grows warped and ill-noured. However, one should not infer that nowledge of the Bible will, in itself, proce faith. One of the tragedies of higher ucation has been the way in which college urses in Bible have denuded the student's faith rather than make it flourish. There have been scholars who have approached Bible study with the purpose of tearing it apart for scholarly analysis. They do not put it together again as a nutriment of faith. The Bible is a library of many books, written by many different men for many different purposes at many different times. It its not a book of magic. It is, however, a book portraying the growth of religious experience in man's growing knowledge of faith. As a source of enrichment for religious experience there has never been a more wonderful record than the Holy Bible.

The contrast between the correct and the incorrect way of using scriptures was illustrated by Jesus when He was in Jerusalem just prior to His crucifixion. There were three incidents which highlighted His conflict with the three major groups or parties in Palestine.

### JESUS AND THE HERODIANS

The first group which confronted Jesus was made up largely of Herodians. They were practical and worldly men; individuals who had followed King Herod; ruthless and realistic politicians who had gained power in Palestine through toddying to the Roman conquerors. To them faith was a very superficial thing. Indeed, the deeper values of all life were subordinated to expediency. They were the kind, who when in Rome, did as the Romans; and when in Jerusalem did as the Jews. They would thoroughly agree with the modern psychologists who insist that man's function is to adjust to his environment. They adjusted well and easily and enjoyed the wealth and political proferment that went with it. They usually picked the winning side. Since the winning side was obviously Rome, they gave primary allegience to Rome. They joined a group of stiff-necked Pharisees and with ingraciating manner came up to Jesus: "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully and care for no man for you do not regard the position of men. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay

taxes to Caesar, or not?"

Jesus, of course, was aware of their malice. "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites?" It is usually true that those who adjust to the status quo resent anyone who challenges their souls to greater faith. They are hypocrites. "Show me the money for the tax," said Jesus. "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said, "Caesar's." Then He said to them, "Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." One can see the Herodians lick their lips with satisfaction and the Pharisees ready to burst with apoplexy. Jesus went on. "And render to God the things that are God's."

Of all the incidents reported in the Bible I believe this mast clearly indicates the contrast between those who would reject the Bible and the experience which it contributes to faith and those who would accept it. The one main purpose of the Bible, like a golden thread running throughout, is to render unto God the things that are God's. It is the one thing which the practical fools of this world, with their passion for "adjusting to reality" as they call it, neglect.

This particular passage in the New Testament has been quoted time and time again by the practical realists and those who accept evil and excuse it with a rationalization saying, "Render unto Caesar." They give lip service to the Bible, but neglect to render unto God the things that are God's. All the way through the Holy Scriptures there is the record, the repeated record, of men rendering unto God the things that are God's. There is a record of their failures; their successes; their struggles for understanding, their conflicts with political and social and economic factors. The Bible is no book of science. The stories of Adam and Eve, the stories of Sampson and Delilah, of Elijah and the Prophets of Bale, of David, Solomon, of Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Psalms and the Proverbs; all tell of the experience which man has had in rendering unto God the things that are God's. We render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's only when there is no obvious obligation to God. But where there is a conflict between the things that are Caesar's and the things that are God's; the Bible points out that man must render unto God the things that are God's regardless of Caesar and regardless of the practical implications of adjusting to one's environment.

To gain the most from the Bible in the development of faith through religious experience, study the way in which men have grown beyond the practical and the worldly and have rendered unto God the things that were God's. Of course, in the long run the most practical is to render unto God the things that are God's. That the Bible teaches us and we gain the religious experience the Bible teaches. So our faith grows.

## JESUS AND THE SADDUCEES

The second incident which occurred in Jerusalem following His contest with the Herodians found Jesus confronted by the Sadducees The Sadducees, like the Herodians, had learned how to adjust to their environment. But they were nowhere near the bland disciples of expediency the Herodians were. They had helped organize passive resistance against the Roman conquerer. They gave sincere devotion to the institutions of Judaism, especially the temple. If they were willing to die for their belief they had rationalized their belief to such an extent that their lives were not seriously in danger.

It was their rationalizing which had denuded their faith of vitality. They were experts at spacious arguments; that intellectual hop, skip and jump game. They had substituted a devotion to the Jewish community and to the temple for a real devotion to God and His righteousness. This is not a new trick of the human mind. One finds it among Methodists, Catholics and Jews of today. Indeed, it's an alluring temptation to all people to substitute loyalty to the forms of institutions for loyalty to God.

The manner in which the Sadducees showed their attitude was in a tricky theological question concerning the resurrection which they didn't believe in. They believed that immortality rested in the people and the institution, rather than the individual. Hence, individual righteousness was not nearly as important as the institution. So, they put a question to Jesus: "If a man dies, having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. This is what Moses said. Now there were seven brothers amongst us. The first married, died and having no children left his wife to his brothers. So to the second and third down to the seventh. After them all the women died. If there is a resurrection, therefore, to which of the seven will she be wed in the resurrection?" Jesus answered them, "You are wrong because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. The Scriptures make it clear that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like free spirits in Heaven. As for the resurrection of the

ad, have you not read what was said to u by God in the Scriptures? 'I am the God Abraham and Isaac and the God of Jacob.' e is not God of the dead but of the living." An important thing to realize about the ble is that it is a continuing record of a *ing* God and of *eternally living* Sons of od always growing and developing, and at all the institutions and arguments and stems of thought are but passing phases in e spiritual growth of individuals. When u use the Bible to rationalize temporal in-itutions, be they churches or temples, busi-sses or governments, you are missing the ntral characters in the unfolding drama of e Bible. Those characters are God and is Sons. They are the only enduring ob-cts of faith. Kingdoms rise and fall, urches grow and wane, but God and His ns go on living together forever.

## JESUS AND THE PHARISEES

The third incident followed on the heels of e other two. It was a question planned by e Pharisees, that party which represented e best Jewish religious and political ought. But it was made up of tired pa-iots who had so compromised with both the sition of the Herodians and the position the Sadducees they had become confused; nfused like the people who say they believe the ideal but also say that half a loaf is tter than none. After a while they keep tting the loaf in half until none is left. So, rsons in all ages who compromise with ghteousness often have no righteousness t. The Pharisees put two questions to sus: first, "What is the great command-ent of the law." Like many lawyers, the arisees were constantly arguing the prin-ciples of moral right and wrong but were unable to follow them because they were confused. They had no point of destination. They did not possess a primary loyalty. Jesus saw this and so He answered them. "The first and great Commandment is that Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind. And the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."

Just as it is necessary to understand that the primary objective of the Bible is not the continuation of an institution but to know man's experience with a living God, the whole law and the prophets of the Bible have a primary objective which is to help people love the Lord their God and to love their neighbors. All moral law and all principles of living flow from these two primary laws To the degree that your Bible study helps you to love God and your neighbor, to that degree your faith is being enriched by the Bible.

Now Jesus asked the question of the Pharisees which capped the climax of these three incidents. He said, "What do you think of the Christ?" Who's Son is He?" And they have the historical answer of the Bible: "He is the Son of David." But Jesus replied and said, "How is it then that David inspired by the Spirit calls Christ 'Lord', if He is only the son of David in the physical sense. A father doesn't call his son lord." What Jesus is drawing from the Bible is this obvious truth. Christ is Lord. Christ is the climax of religious experience as portrayed in the Bible. Christ is the recognition of God in man.

# he Romance of Our Faith

FRANK A. COURT, St. Paul Methodist Church, Lincoln, Nebraska

The Bible is a most romantic and fascina-ng book! There is not a dull moment in it r those who read it with imagination and telligence and seek to understand it. It is Book of power, pulsating with the life and mance of men and women turning drama-moments of defeat into victory through e power of their religious faith.

Think of the pregnant possibilities in that e in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews as describes the romance of our belief and ose who, "through faith, subdued king-ms, wrought righteousness . . . quenched e violence of fire, out of weakness were ade strong, waxed valiant in fight." Now, that, to me, is real living! Truly to live, one must have a faith able to overthrow king-doms of tyranny and replace them with the democracies of free men, hammer life along the lines of goodness, transform weakness to strength, and grow spiritually stronger in the battle of life.

Contrast that story and description in the Book of the Ages to the drab existence por-trayed in a book of the moment, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit.* It depicts the lack of romance in a great many people. "The Gray Flannel Suit" becomes a badge or a uni-form of the man rushing from the suburb to his place of work in the city, uncertain of

himself, unsure of his purpose, and yet predictable in his actions, for one soon comes to realize that he will do the same thing day by day. The book depicts the average man of our time as never quite overcoming the effects of the war, deciding he'll go to Church because it's the thing to do, trying to locate a new neighborhood because the old home isn't quite stylish enough.

The book may be a mirror; but our age needs more than a mirror reflecting our own weaknesses. We need that magnifying glass of faith which will reveal God in the struggles and conflicts of life and will show a power that can subdue kingdoms, bring righteousness, quench the violence of fire, and, out of weakness, make us strong and valiant in the battle of life.

## ROMANCE IN THE PAST

Most of us will admit that there were romantic moments in religion in the past. What a thrilling moment it must have been when the disciples realized that death could not control Christ and that the Cross did not have the final word. In the power of a new faith, they went out to set the world upside down. They took their lives in their hands and all but one met a martyr's death! Theirs was a romantic creed, and they took their lives and threw them into the battle of their day.

What a romantic moment it must have been when Martin Luther stood at the Diet of Worms! The power of the old Church was ringed against him. Called upon to recant, he refused and replied, "Here I stand; God helping me, I can do no other!" It was the romance of God's truth breaking through again with a new stream of cleansing power.

We often think of the romantic faith of the pilgrim fathers and mothers who, in the light of a living faith, came to found a new nation where they could worship, build their little Churches with their clear windows open to the horizon, set their stern-visioned countenances against any easy indulgence or the inroad of evil.

Now, of course, today we stress realism instead of romance. We talk of the hard core of reality in our belief. But, life can become very dull, and flat without the fire, zest, and enthusiasm of a romantic faith. It is always amazing to me how we can ever allow religion that has to do with life, with God, and with that which is sacred ever to be reduced to that which is a matter of mere duty, empty ritual and meaningless rote!

## BELIEF IN GOD

First of all, there is the romance of our belief in God. What a romantic belief it is —man turning his face from the sod, bowing in worship, and believing that he is created in the Image of God! It is a matter of faith, choices, and belief.

We can say that logic is upon the side of belief in God; but, after all, it is a matter of a man's faith that, at the heart of the universe, there is a Father-God who cares, a Heart that understands, and a Love that will not let us go.

Sometimes. I like to take our old bible and go through it, step by step, reading of man's heroic climb up the stairway of life into an ever-widening, deepening, and truer sense of understanding of God. Each saint or sage of the old testament added one new syllable to the sentences of man's understanding of the nature of God.

Moses, in the desert, heard God speak through the beauty of a burning bush. It called him back to the duty of walking the long way back to Egypt to set God's people free. It soared to the heights of the ethical teachings of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai and it ended on the rim of The Promised Land, with an old man voicing his faith, "The Eternal God is our refuge; and, underneath are the Everlasting Arms!"

Isaiah in the Temple saw God high, holy, and lifted up. Isaiah came forth with the great dream that "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks, and man shall not lift up a sword against nation." Looking down the years, he saw the fulfillment of God coming through personality; and, he said, "Unto us, a Child is given; unto us, a Son is born; and, His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace."

Jeremiah met God in the thick of the social, political, and religious problems of his day. He saw the holy places desecrated by idolatry, religion turned into a matter of priestly profit, and merciless humanity grinding down human life; and, he lifted religion high, to the matter of a man's personal relationship with God. He saw man related to God, beyond his tribe or his land, as a living soul and a personal power. And, out of it all, Jeremiah heard God calling him, "Thou, therefore, girdeth thy loins, arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: Be not dismayed at their faces . . . they shall fight against thee; but, they shall not prevail against thee; for, I am with

ee, to deliver thee." And Jeremiah uttered e word of God's Power in the struggle and sting time as a Spirit that can remake old aces into new and clean up the tragic con- tions.

Amos pronounced the word "righteous- ss" and Hosea, "forgiveness." And Christ, eaking through time with his word, "He at hath seen me hath seen the Father," onounces the word "love" through His fe, revealing the very heart of God. Well, hat a romantic faith it is! Some people ould rather believe that Bertrand Russell ows more about life when he writes that an is but an accidental collection of atoms, an infinitesimal speck on the gigantic heel of life." But, some of us would rather ust the great dreamers and our Christ and nd our life by the romance of a living faith.

## OUR ROMANTIC CREED

Or think of our romantic creed and how sheds light on our relationship to God. ven more important than our faith in God the kind of a God in whom we have faith. he Christian belief is that we have a God ho is personal, who understands our need, ith whom we can commune in prayer, and God who "so loved the world that he sent s only begotten Son that whosoever liveth id believeth in him should not perish but ve everlasting life."

Some men do not believe this. But think what a difference it makes in life if we believe it and if it is true! That is why ristianity has always been the Gospel of e Good News. Our God is a God of Love.

This is a matter of faith, but it has back it the voice of reason. For as scientists ad the record of the universe, there seems be a purpose, a divine reason, and a Will at has shaped the whole. In the beginning things, there was placed in the atoms the timate ends that would lead to an orderly iverse and rise to its heighth in person- ty.

If someone does not believe in a personal od, then the universe is even a more baf- ng mystery to them than to those who read to the story of life the Spirit of God that is derstanding and cares. For we are per- nal. We know, we live, we love, we dream, d we dare. If God is not personal, then life there is a personal being who has sen higher than the beginning and the urce of all things. We take our side upon e romance of the creed which believes that an can know God within his life, experi- ce his love, and, through prayer, find his soul renewed and his inner spirit cleansed.

We do not believe the individuals who have been strengthened through the years by this personal belief have been deluded. The great souls that have made their way slowly down aisles of praise, up altar steps of prayer, into the holy of holies have felt a Presence, sensed the power that has under- girded and sustained their life. By no sense of imagination can anyone ever believe or make me believe that Christ was wrong as, early in the morning, He made his way above the city to the heights, there to com- mune with God and to draw strength for dark-valley days.

But this creed is one that we can only know really as we experience it in our own life. For many years, Dr. Elwood Wor- cester was a leader in Boston and Harvard University. Often, Harvard students would go to consult him. One day when he was in the Appleton Chapel a student walked in. When Dr. Worcester asked him about his religious life, the boy replied bitterly: "I came to Harvard to get away from that non- sense!" When he was asked if he ever pray- ed, he said: "No, prayer is the act of a fool or an imbecile who likes to talk with him- self."

Dr. Worcester was too wise a counselor not to recognize that the bitterness and scorn in the youth revealed his inner un- happiness, so he manifested no impatience or annoyance whatsoever. Instead, Dr. Worcester added: "Young man, you pride yourself on being scientific. Very well, I propose to you an experiment. I challenge you to set aside five minutes of each day for three weeks to be alone and, with all the earnestness that you can command, ask God to reveal himself to you in prayer." The youth accepted the challenge. Anyone who doubts prayer can try this experiment of five minutes a day of quiet communion and discover the answer. For God always comes into such a life.

What a romantic creed and belief it is that any room may be made a shrine where- in the Spirit of God dwells, that his spirit of Life may shine upon the common way, that our own weaknesses may be made strong through God's Love, and that we can lift and undergird the life of others with the power of prayer! And our faith in prayer traces its way back to our faith that God is personal, that He understands, and that He knows. Here is a romantic creed indeed.

## GOD REVEALED

This leads to another element of our faith. If God is, indeed, truly personal, as so much of experience indicates, we would expect that He would fully reveal Himself, not in the beauty of a sunset, the towering mountains, and the delicate flower, but in a personal life. The romance of our faith is that God cared enough about life that He was willing to share our common way, face the ultimate pain, know the bitter defeat and betrayal of friends, touch life at its deepest need, and truly show his concern and care through his willingness to die, if necessary, that man might be lifted into a renewed relationship with his Love! This is the good news of Christ.

Christ stands apart, above, and beyond all other great teachers. We admire Socrates, St. Francis of Assisi, the Buddha, and Confucius. But there is only one, the Christ, whom we believe has fully revealed God to humankind throughout the generations. He spoke as One who has had authority. The rest came as seekers. The others discussed truth; He came as Truth! It was said of him that He knew what was in man and all lives that have come humbly into the Presence of the Christ have discovered that knowledge for themselves. Anyone who gives his life into the keeping of the Christ will discover who He is, as Albert Schweitzer says, for themselves.

In the days of Charles Lamb, if anyone would loan him a book, he would read, dog-ear it, and make notations on the margin; and, when he returned it, it was much more of a book because, besides the story of the author, there would be part of Charles Lamb and his spirit written over the author's words.

As we loan the story of our life to Him, He rewrites some of the lines, makes additions in the margins, and gives the life back with a touch of his Spirit indelibly stamped upon it. No one else shoulders out the sky as does Christ. No one else touches our life with such an undying love.

For sheer romantic thought, nothing in all of the history of the human race can compare to the story of the Cross. By the standards of the world, it should be the story of defeat; but, through the Power of God, it has become a symbol of victory. Here is the final word on the outreach of God's Love! Before the lengthening shadow of the Cross across the story of man's heart-hunger, who can but bow and say, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my strength, my life, my all!"

## DISCOVERING FAITH

A man once asked Sir James Simpson, the great Scottish surgeon, what he considered his greatest discovery. The questioner expected that it would be something in the scientific realm, probably one of the doctor's contributions to medicine. But, the answer was: "My greatest discovery is that I am a great sinner and that Jesus is a great Saviour!"

And, the Church simply asks you to put this to a test. In a worship service, in the communion service or in your own prayer life, make the great experiment of seeking for God's forgiveness and knowing that, in the act of repentance, you may receive, through God's Mercy, that which you seek. Then, in the thought of Christ, put that thought of forgiveness into your relationship with others Discover again the power that comes as a person knows that he is in a right relationship with God, with Christ, with others, and with his own inner self!

How profitable it would be to take this living creed and show how it has changed life. One could point how, out of defeat, it has given a sense of victory and has shown individuals who do not know how to live a pathway of living that is a singing, joyous, God-filled way. It is God's way of salvation.

Under the alchemy of the Christian faith, life has been lifted again and again out of the depths of despair to the very heights. Here is the basis for our democracy, much of our intellectual discovery, the healing ministry of the Church, the stimulus of education, and the teaching that every life is sacred in the sight of God.

And, as if that were not enough, Christianity teaches a way that is unending. Death becomes but an old door separating the seen from the unseen; and, by that door, there stands One who explains: "I am the Way, I am the Door, I am the Life." If you know the romance of our Christian faith, you have life's most priceless possession. If you have not discovered it, why not, in the company of the Spirit of Christ, find it now?

# Behold! The Unbeliever

JOHN W. MEISTER, First Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana

*And he marvelled because of their unbelief. — Mark 6:6.*

Only two times does the New Testament escribe Jesus as being shocked by other eople. Many times—no less than thirty—esus is described as "astonishing" other eople or causing them to "marvel." But nly twice is he pictured as being "astonish-d by" or "marveling at" other people. One nstance he marveled at the faith of the cen-urion who believed God through Jesus could eal his sick slave. Let us direct our atten-on to the other instance.

According to Mark, Jesus had engaged in combination teaching and healing mission hich carried him to Capernaum where He ealed a paralytic and a man with a withered and, to the country of the Gerasenes where e restored to sanity a raving maniac, and the other side of the Sea of Galilee where e healed a woman with a hemorrhage and evived a little girl who was taken for dead. Ve do not wonder that his reputation as a an of "mighty works and wonders and gns" was well and widely established.

At this juncture in his ministry He elected return to his home country of Nazareth, pparently with the expectation that He ould bring to his fellow townsmen and elatives the same effective good news He ad brought to total strangers. But how uickly He was disillusioned! Those who eard him in his home synagogue jibed: Who does he think he is? Where did he et all this so-called 'wisdom'? Why he's ne of *us!* We know him too well to fall for s talk. Isn't he the same carpenter whose nop was right here in Nazareth? And en't these his brothers—James and Joses nd Judas and Simon? Aren't these his sters? Let him move on where people on't know him so well if he wants to talk ke this!"

## CLIMATE OF RIDICULE

Jesus quickly realized He was powerless such a climate and He signed with hurt unding in every syllable, "A prophet is ot without honor except in his own country, nd among his own kin, and in his own ouse." He had learned the hard lesson arned by many another: that it is generally ost difficult—if not impossible—to help ose we know the best and love the most. inston Churchill may have been thought a atesman in this country, but during his tive days he was known at home as a party politician. Doctors almost always feel helpless to care for their own families. Many a man has earned the respect of his community and a position of prominence in his business but is ignored, scoffed at or ridiculed at home. And I have noticed that few ministers choose their home town as a place in which to minister. To put reverse English on the principle, there is much truth in the quip that an expert is only an ordinary guy away from home.

All this Jesus must have known, however, for it is so eternally true to human nature. And insofar as the jibing was aimed at himself as a person He could not have been much concerned. After all, He was not eager for the "honor" of being a prophet—at home or anywhere else. What He was eager for, however, was that truth be proclaimed and accepted What shocked him was the failure of the people to recognize the truth and worth in what He said, regardless of who said it. To him his message made sense. To refuse to recognize and to believe truth, reasonable truth which held the promise of peace and health, was nonsense. This shocked and astonished him. As Mark put it, "He marveled because of their unbelief."

We in our day are not normally surprised at unbelief. We do not marvel at it. Even among church people we expect to find more kinship with Thomas and his doubting than with Peter when he confidently but unsuccessfully tried to walk on the water. Our respect for physical science and the scientific method has taught us to expect intelligent people to shun away from believing too definitely in *anything*. In spite of the current return to religion the dominant mood as regards spiritual truth is still more one of unbelief than of belief. Surely, then, there is reason for us to seek to learn *why* Jesus was astonished at unbelief and *what* he did about it.

## WHY HE MARVELED

Behold the unbelievers around Jesus! What was there in their reaction to cause Jesus to marvel? As we have already indicated, they confused the worth of the message with their estimate of the messenger. Because the townspeople could see nothing unusual in *him* they failed to see anything unusual in *what He said.* And the reason they could see nothing unusual in

him was, oddly enough, that He was so much like them! Hardly a compliment to themselves! They could explain him, or thought they could, so they refused to believe in him.

Of course Jesus would marvel at a reaction so stupid. Fortunately for us, truth is never dependent upon the personalities who convey it. As St. Paul put it, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." (My sister delights in observing that this makes us all "cracked pots.") If the worth and purity of truth depended upon the worth and purity of the conveyer of truth we would be living in the darkness of falsehood. As it is, however, anyone who puts his mind to it can be a conveyer of partial truth, at least, and everyone—absolutely everyone— is worth listening to. A wise man is one who has learned to listen to others and to evaluate what they say, not on the basis of who they are or what they do for a living, but on the basis of the validity of what they say. As someone has observed, even a watch that is stopped tells the correct time twice a day.

When the townspeople refused to believe Jesus because they thought they could explain him Jesus naturally marveled.

## FALSE INTIMACY

In the second place, they could not hear the message of Jesus because of their intimacy with him. They knew him as a friend and fellow citizen. They remembered him as one who until recently had been a carpenter in their midst. They knew his mother, his brothers and his sisters. Indeed, they were so well acquainted with him that their ears were deaf to any novelty or power in his words.

Let me apply this principle in a way that is more than literal. If we consider Jesus as the conveyer of truth, then it is still the case that men often fail to believe when they are too intimate with the conveyer of truth. I am thinking just now of the universe as the conveyer of truth. Many unbelievers of our own day are those who are so intimately acquainted with the universe and the way it works that they fail to see the truth to which it points.

Let us spell that out just a little. For just about a century now we have been in the midst of what is called the scientific movement. The essence of this movement is that we discover truth by observing the way the world works and then formulating statements or laws to describe what we observe. Thus Newton observed that an apple fell to the ground and developed the statement or law of gravity which described the way all things fall to the ground. There was a time —fortunately we seem to be past it—when vast numbers of people thought that the only truth worth listening to was such truth revealed by this acquired intimacy with the universe.

It was then that the idea became widespread that we could not intelligently believe in God, at least not in God as Creator and Sustainer of life, as Purpose in a living world. Instead, we were taught by many that this world was created by the accidental collision of two stars which whirled this speck of a planet out into space, spinning at precisely the right distance from the sun and amid precisely the right gases to create and sustain life. In other words, intimacy with the universe, the conveyer of truth, breeded unbelief in Purpose and belief in cosmic accident. Truly, this kind of unbelief is something to marvel it.

Suppose you have a bag containing one hundred marbles, ninety-nine black and one white. Shake the bag and let one out. The chance that the first marble out being the white one is exactly one in one hundred. Now put the marbles back and start over again. The chance of the white coming out is still one in a hundred, but the chance of the white coming out twice in succession is one in ten thousand (one hundred times one hundred). Now try a third time, and the chance of the white coming out three times in succession is one hundred times ten thousand or one in a million.

Yet there are those who pretend to unbelief in God by believing in a cosmic accident among the stars which produced our earth just the right distance from the sun to sustain life, not so close as to scorch us or so far as to freeze us; which evolved just the right amount of water, carbon dioxide, oxygen and nitrogen to sustain life; and which evolved life itself.

Truly such unbelief is enough to cause anyone to marvel. And notice that it comes from a false intimacy with the conveyor of truth. It comes when one supposes that bebecause he can observe *how* the world works he knows *why* it works that way. It is the same with us as with those in the synagogue at Nazareth: they supposed that because they had observed Jesus and his family they knew why He spoke as He did.

## RESPONSE OF FAITH

Now notice what Jesus did. Mark puts it very simply: "He went on among the villages teaching." He did not let the un-

elief of a few stop him in his ministry to ne many. He was not paralyzed by the ailure of his friends to belief.

And neither can we be stopped by the ynicism and doubt and unbelief of a few. It is still true that Jesus can do mighty work without the response of faith. Our task remains as it has always been: to respond with our own faith and to convey the truth to those who will listen and believe.

## BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

Continued from page 2

ale Divinity School. This provocative and timulating volume, which will challenge ome readers and caution others, shows wisom and is surely timely. The burden of the ook is the mixing of religions and politics nd the application of Christian principles o the political scene. (Association, 180 pp., 3)

*Meet These Men* contains fourteen biographical sermons by a perennial favorite, lovis G. Chappell. Structurally, the sermons represent a consistent and logical development; thematically, the sermons are pignant and clear. There are no purple assages and few remarkable quotations; ut the sermons are, none-the-less, warm, ntimate and persuasive. Among the biblical ersonalities considered are: Paul, Habakuk, Naaman, and Judas. (Abingdon, 156 p., $2)

*Tribute to Jesus* is a collection of sixty oems of faith and devotion by Edgar Daniel ramer. The poems, which center for the ost part on the nativity, the ministry and ie passion of Christ, are excellent for worhip use and sermon quotation. The reewer wishes the book contained three times ie present number, for what is here indicas a natural talent and an inspirational anner. (Christian Education Press, 56 pp., .50)

*Footnotes* by Gaston Foote, pastor of Fort Worth's First Methodist Church, is a volume "sidewalk sermonettes for saints and nners" and come from his newspaper colmn. The fifty pieces, arranged in a crazy uilt fashion, are individually sprightly nd full of all kinds of homiletic ideas for reachers. Some of the titles are: Beefeak and No Teeth, Cross-eyed Religion, n Talking to Yourself, and The Devil's ash Register. But there are also titles ch as: Family Religion and Making Marage Meaningful. (Revell, 124 pp., $2)

## WORTH QUOTING

Continued from page 2

ves us . . . The limits He sets to our evil e dreadful in the opportunities they leave to us. When we will to plunge into moral and spiritual and intellectual suicide we do not find our way barred.

The younger son took full advantage of his freedom. He strayed as far as he could and plunged recklessly into every form of debauchery. . . . How far he strayed from God! . . . . Yet he was never really far from God. God makes it impossible for any man ever to stray far from Him. Notice that even in the far country at the height of his debauchery he was still closely tied to his father. The story remnds us that it was on his father's bounty that he lived even in his life of wastefulness. In spite of all the freedom which the young man had apparently achieved, he was nevertheless completely dependent upon his father's substance. In a sense there is no man ever far from God or free from God.

Ronald S. Wallace in *Many Things in Parables* (Harper)

* * * *

When I was in Africa some years ago reliable medical missionaries said that a "curse of evil" pronounced against a person actually would cause him to die. I protested that a curse on him could not possibly cause a man's death. But the missionaries simply said, "We have buried men who were cursed." They made autopsies, and filed the report, "died from fear." Fear is public enemy number one. Undoubtedly it aggravates such difficulties as high blood pressure and heart ailments.

The conclusion of the matter is this: more people are sick because they are unhappy than unhappy because they are sick. The preachers, the psychiatrists, and the physicians are now saying the same thing: physical health is, in some measure, determined by healthy attitudes. The family doctor used to ask, "How's your appetite?" Now he often asks, "How's your attitude?"

Gaston Foote in *Footnotes* (Revell)

### Prayer for Kindness

While others pray for futile lands
And gold to fill their trembling hands,
Dear Lord, I kneel and humbly ask
For strength to do each given task.

While others pray for length of years,
For crumbling dross and great careers,
Dear Lord, with folks who weep in mind,
I humbly ask that I be kind.

Edgar Daniel Kramer in *Tribute to Jesus* (Christian Education Press)

* * * *

Links

Through this weak flesh
That wraps me 'round,
I am made one
With all the ground.

Through this red heart
Of dreams and grief,
I am made one
With bird and leaf.

Through this frail soul
That thrills the clod,
I am made one
With Christ and God.

Edgar Daniel Kramer

* * * *

The source of life is God. The mystic applies this to human life when he says that there is in man an uncreated element; or in the Book of Job where it is written that his mark is in their foreheads. In the last analysis the mood of reverence that should characterize all men's dealings with each other finds its basis here. The demand to treat all human beings as ends in themselves, or the moral imperative that issues in respect for personality, finds its profound inspiration here. To deal with men on any other basis, to treat them as if there were not vibrant and vital in each one the very life of the very God, is the great blasphemy; it is the judgment that is leveled with such relentless severity on modern man.

Howard Thurman in
*Deep River* (Harper)

ROLLAND W. SCHLOERB
HARRY H. KRUENER
GENE E. BARTLETT
ROBERT BRYCE SANFORD
WESLEY P. FORD



# 'aith and Life's Unanswered Questions

ROLLAND W. SCHLOERB, Hyde Park Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois

An intense and poignant question appears the heart of both the Old Testament and e New Testament. This question is not timmed from the surface of an inquiring ind; it is wrung from the depths of a suffring heart.

We do not know the experience of the man ho asked the question in the Old Testaent. He was the writer of a Psalm. He ay have had some experience of torture, or rsecution, or great loss. In the midst of he cries out: "My God, my God, why hast ou forsaken me?" He could not underand why he had to experience this pain.

All New Testament readers immediately ace the question there. It came from Jesus his moments of intense suffering on the oss. He too used these words from the wenty-second Psalm, and his agony He ied out, "My God, My God, why?"

This question can stand for the many ques-es that life makes us ask ourselves. Life is ll of unanswered questions. The longer I ve, the more life seems to bristle with em. Again and again, I am asked by meone who is going through a deep valley human experience, "Why do things like is happen?" Why is a man taken by death the height of his usefulness? Why is a oung mother crippled by illness? Why is child born with some physical or mental ndicap? If a man die, shall he live gain?"

And when such questions are asked, I ually have to answer that our faith does ot give us simple answers to these ques-ons. But that ought not to be the end of e matter. It is not sufficient to say to a rson that we do not know the answers these difficult questions. What we all ng for is a faith which will help us to live en when we do not have the answers to ese difficult questions. What we all long r is a faith which will help us to live even hen we do not have the answers to many our most urgent questions.

## INADEQUATE ANSWERS

One thing our faith suggests is that we should not accept inadequate answers for our difficult questions. This is the real quarrel of Job with his friends. He was the sufferer. He was the one who was asking the questions out of the depth of his pain. And his friends came with their answers. They gave many of the usual answers. They told him that his trouble was the result of his sin. He did not deny his sin, but he did deny that suffering was apportioned according to a man's wrong-doing. His pain could not be explained as easily as that. Job is to be remembered not because he found the answers to his questions, but because he refused to accept the too facile answers that were given at that time.

Jesus was confronted one day by the same kind of question. The people brought a blind man to him. This man had been blind from birth. The people asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" That was a question that already implied an answer. They assumed that the explanation of disease was sin—somebody's sin. Jesus immediately rejected the implied answer. He said, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents." Whatever the answer to that urgent question might be, it was not the one that they suggested.

This aspect of our faith has been of help when people have asked me these intense questions. They speak out of some great pain or sorrow, and they add, "What have I done that this should happen to me?" At least I can reply that we do not accept the facile answer that all suffering is apportioned according to one's actions. That some suffering comes from human frailty, or ignorance, or sin, is, I believe, demonstrable. But to say that all human suffering is the result of the sin of the sufferer is giving a wrong answer to a very difficult question. Our faith ought to help us to reject the wrong answers.

Faith affirms that it is better to have our questions unanswered than to try to build our lives on the wrong answers.

### SEARCH FOR ANSWERS

Our faith further suggests that though we may not know the answers to our most urgent questions, we can trust that there are answers. We believe in God, and we believe that what we do not know is known by him. Perhaps someday we shall know an answer that will satisfy us.

I have seen this happen in the lives of people. People who saw no meaning or significance whatever in some event that befell them, later learned to see that it had some possibilities of meaning that only time helped them to discover. Faith in God does not give us the answers to these haunting questions. It only reminds us that there are answers, and that some day we may be given light on what they are. "Now we see through a glass darkly," said Paul, "but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood."

One of the experiences of my student days that has stayed vividly with me, was coming to the Auditorium Theater on Sunday morning to hear Dr. Frank Gunsaulus preach. Central Church was meeting there at that time. He seemed to be a man of great insight and strength.

However, Joseph Fort Newton tells of an experience in Dr. Gunsaulus' life in those early years. He had the service each week. He had duties at Armour Institute. He responded to myriad calls for lectures, writing, much traveling. And the result was that the man of iron broke. For six months he lay in agony. No sermons came from the preacher then, no books, only a poem. That poem revealed the faith about which we speak here:

I care not that the furnace fire of pain
Laps round my life and burns alway;
I only care to know that not in vain
The fierce heats touch me throughout night and day.

Much that seems unbearable might be borne if we felt there were some meaning in what was happening. And many questions can remain unanswered if we have the faith that there is an answer. Here faith bids us trust where we cannot see, and to go beyond "My God, My God, why?" to "Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit."

### INCOMPLETE ANSWERS

Our faith suggests another approach to our unanswered questions. It suggests that we can live significantly and with meaning even though we do not have answers to all of our questions. John Dewey once said that we need to learn to hang some questions on the hook without having them answered.

John MacMurray once said that "faith is what you propose to do in the face of your ignorance." Such faith does not give easy answers. It accepts the facts that many of our most urgent questions will not have answers. But one can still go forward and find meaning in living. As Seelye Bixler says, "There are questions that lose some of their bitter insistence when theological thought gives way to practical deed and speculation over the nature of the world yields to concern for the plight of one's neighbor. Some suffering can be transmuted through love." You can do what you can even though you do not know everything you would like to know.

Our faith ought and does give us answers to some perplexing questions of life. But there are many questions that remain unanswered. In these cases our faith suggests that we be slow to accept inadequate answers, that we trust that there are answers and meanings that we do not apprehend, and that even though we do not know all the answers, we can still give ourselves to acts of meaning, transmuting suffering into love.

## The Rhythm of Faith

HARRY H. KRUENER, Dean of the Chapel, Denison University, Granville, Ohio

Generally speaking, the stories of Samson in the Book of Judges have little spiritual value. Now and again, however, there is a religious insight, as in the 25th verse of the 13th chapter: "And the woman bare a son and called his name Samson. And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp between Zorah and Eshtaol."

I have often thought of that phrase: "The Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times." Notice, not continually but at times, by pulsations, fits and starts, ups and downs. In other words, there was a rhythm to Samson's faith, as there is bound to be a rhythm to our own faith. Sometimes we get the idea that our religion should be always on an even keel, that every moment we should feel

ar to God. Then, when we do not have at experience, how discouraged we get; say we have lost our religion. May t the plain truth be that for most of us ligion is and always will be a matter of ups d downs? There are moments when our ith is a clear, white radiance, but there e moments when the skies are like solid ad to our pleading. And the mature Chris-an is the one who recognizes this alterna-on, that there is an inescapable rhythm to e spiritual life. It is a matter of "at nes."

## INSPIRATION AND TEMPTATION

For instance, the Christian life always ternates between inspiration and tempta-on. Always, mind you. Sometimes we get e idea that the more Christian we are the ss we are tempted. Far from it; our temp-tions only become more subtle. Or some-nes we think the older we get the less we e tempted. Again, that is far from the uth. Actually temptation is not something e get rid of as we go along; it is the other lf of inspiration, the valley between the ountains. The person who is never tempted evil is that person who is never tempted good, either. Temptation, in other words, ways goes hand in hand with moral insight. ney are two sides of one coin.

Have you ever thought why the Gospel riters picture the temptation experience of sus always following His baptism? It is st because it makes common sense, does it t? Jesus had just received His call to the inistry. It was an ecstatic moment, the pirit of God descending on Him and saying: This is my beloved Son." But just because e inspiration was so great, the temptation as also great, and it followed hard upon it. e read: "Immediately was Jesus led up into e wilderness to be tempted of the devil." nd how else can we understand the tempta-ons? Did the voice at the baptism tell Him e would be the Saviour of men? The voice the wilderness tempted Him to save men feeding them. Did the voice at the baptism y He would be the Son of God? The voice the wilderness said that if He were the n of God He should cast Himself from the mple. Did the voice at the baptism show im God's Kingdom? The devil's voice in the ilderness tempted Him: "If you are to be king, why not now? Worship me and I ll give you all the kingdoms of the world." ou see, how inevitably it worked: inspira-on, temptation, high moment, low moment. nd if our Lord so endured, how shall we cape? We can put this down: for every moment of baptism there will be a moment in the wilderness. It is part of the rhythm of our faith. As Samson knew: "The Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times."

## FEELING AND THINKING

Or again, consider this: the Christian life always alternates between feeling and thinking. Some people try to make their religion entirely a rational proposition; sooner or later, they fail. On the other hand, there are plenty of Protestants for whom religion is just a good feeling, atmosphere, mood. Gray matter never enters in. Like the lady who shook Dr. Buttrick's hand in New York City to say: "Pastor, you do not know what a comfort your sermons have been to my husband ever since he lost his mind." Well, there are lots of Christians who would like to lose their minds when they join the church. And what a tragedy! Remember this: religion without emotion is sterile, but religion without thought is fugitive. The two must go hand in hand. At times a tide of emotion; do not be afraid of it. But at times the hardest, stiffest thinking you have ever done.

As a matter of fact, the biggest problems facing Christianity today involve head as well as heart, and we had better recognize this. Recently E. Stanley Jones analyzed the results of the elections in India. He points out the disturbing fact that the only areas in which there was a marked increase in the Communist vote were the very areas where we have had the most Christians. Why? He says it is because Christianity in India often gives the right feeling for social justice, the right emotion. But it stops there; it gives no head work, no program, and the Communists step in and capitalize on that omission. See then how heart without head is dangerous in religion; it always has been. Feeling and thinking had better not be separated. All great Christianity alternates between the two, a matter of "at times."

## DOUBT AND CONVICTION

Then, the Christian life always alternates to some extent between doubt and conviction, does it not? This may surprise some of us; we like to think the Christian is one who never doubts. May I suggest that healthy Christianity always alternates between light and shadow, the ebb and flow of doubt and certainty? It is never of one piece. It is like the two roads along the Atlantic coast, Route 1 and Route 1a. Route 1 is fast, as straight as engineering can make it, and you arrive at your destination in record time. Route 1a winds all over, exploring every village, every

bit of shore and rocky scenery from Maine to Florida. To see the Atlanitc coast you have to use both roads, part of the time Route 1 and part of the time Route 1a. So of Christians. The best ones I know have learned to travel both those roads of the spirit—the road of certainty, straight and swift to a conclusion; at times we need that. But then, the road of doubt, too, which here and there wanders a bit from the orthodox and explores the rocky coasts for itself. All great religion is a matter of Route 1 plus Route 1a.

### WORK AND WORSHIP

Finally, the Christian life always alternates between worship and work. Worship is a glorious experience. Aquinas once said that to contemplate his Creator is the highest end of human life. Even this most glorious experience, if it is not followed by action, if Sunday Christianity is not followed immediately by Monday Christianity, becomes stale and how meaningless worship itself becomes.

I have often thought this was one of the greatest lessons God taught the Children of Israel in their journey to the Promised Land. Pursued by the Egyptians, they knelt down in the desert and prayed long and loud. And what did God answer? "Why criest thou to me? Moses, speak unto the Children of Israel that they go forward." I have always liked the contrast of those sentences. What God is saying is: Stop praying and get moving. Do not only call upon Me, but act with Me. Do not only meditate on Sunday, but do something on Monday. Prayer is good, but go forward, too; that is the only way to the Promised Land.

So, it comes down to this: we Christians worship the better to work, and we work the better to worship. St. Francis once knelt in the chapel of San Damiano. It was a dilapidated place with part of the wall down in one corner. As he knelt before the Cross he kept asking: "Lord, how can I serve Thee?" This day the Cross answered him: "Seest thou not My house in ruins? Build My Church." Francis, rising from his prayers, saw the point. He went over to the broken wall and started to gather and lift stones into place. And thus, each day praying before the Cross and working on the wall, he became one of the great builders of Christ's Church.

Inspiration and temptation, feeling and thinking, doubt and conviction, worship and work are the eternal tides of faith. We cannot always live in the heights. As with Samson, the Spirit of the Lord still moves us at times. But may not these very alternations of light and shadow be God's best road to the Promised Land?

## Lives Made Whole by Faith

GENE E. BARTLETT, First Baptist Church, Los Angeles, California

In the biography of one of the outstanding preachers of a generation ago it is related that he and his brother once attended a service in Boston. As they came out his brother asked the common question, "Well, what did you think of the sermon?" The other replied, "It was a good sermon for the Apostle Paul. I am just sorry that he wasn't here to hear it!"

Whenever the preacher comes to his pulpit on a Sunday morning one of the deepest questions he can ask is whether the word he is to preach speaks to the needs of people here and now. Sometimes we who preach can be like a man who picks up the phone and begins to talk but forgets to dial anyone's number! Real preaching must be as much concerned for contact as of content.

In the light of this, we may be confident that the word around which our thought centers touches every life at some time. The picture from the New Testament is a familiar and simple one. It is the occasion when ten lepers were healed, but only one of them returned to thank the Master for his healing. It was to him that Jesus spoke words which have pointed the way for men ever since: "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

This was not the only time this word was spoken to a distressed soul. Once it was a woman who touched Him in a crowd. Again, it was to a blind man who begged to receive his sight. Whenever Jesus said it, He seemed to be revealing the secret of His remarkable ministry to people. It was the faith He called out in them that enabled the blind to see, the stumbling to be made steady, and the broken life to be restored.

That's why it is important for us to understand more deeply what this ministry of Christ means today. He who has never felt the need to have his own life made whole has lived lightly, indeed, and somehow missed the testings which come to all the rest of us in the spiritual life. What life ever grew on

steadily descending plane? It is rather by e process of defeat and victory, stumbling d rising again. It seems to me that Christ inisters to us today in at least two ways making our lives whole.

## HUNGER TO BE WHOLE

First, for some of us He begins by arous- g our hunger to be whole. It is when we e confronted by His life that we realize w half-hearted we have become. Paul often oke of "the fullness of the stature of hrist." It is that very fullness that arouses us the awareness of our own shortcoming. s Iago says in Othello, "He hath a daily auty in his life that makes me ugly." Some- mes it is painful to come to this awareness. ut the hunger to be whole is a deep need for growing spiritual life.

It doesn't take much imagination to know at this word comes to some with great gency because they already know how eply they need this ministry of Christ. ives can be shattered by some deep exper- nce, and men look for a way of healing. rief, for example, can shatter life until it eds to be whole again. Edwin Markham, e poet, has captured this experience in his vn writing. As a young man he was deep- in love with a young woman who was tak- by death. It was, indeed, a shattering ex- rience. In the years that followed he was le to show how his life became whole ain, and he put it in the lines:

I will go back to the pains and the pities
That break the heart of the world with moan.
I will forget in the grief of the cities
The burden of my own.*

d who has come to us in Christ can heal e life stricken by grief and turn it to the ays of serenity and victory. That's one need nich most certainly is here today.

Or again, moral failure can break a life. look back over the years and see that in ite of all you intended your life to be, you ve fallen into failure in your moral life to stand in need of the ministry of Jesus rist. The woman who came to Him one y in contribution to anoint His feet had und the way out in her moral failure. rist saw beneath the externals the inner ed and significantly said to her, "Thy th hath saved thee. Go in peace." I am sure it must have been a long time since she had known any real peace.

## URGE FOR FULLNESS

Equally, a drifting life needs to be made whole, too. The life without purpose has not really found itself. G. K. Chesterton, who was noted for his absent-mindedness, one day called his wife and said, "I am in Haymarket Street. Where am I supposed to be?" She, knowing him well, said, "Come on home." It was easier to start from there. Countless souls ask, Where am I supposed to be? Have we a word for them? Unless we have they will not find completeness of life which we believe is God's will for everyone.

The urge to find fullness of life is deep in everything God made. You see it in nature. Some weeks ago some children dropped some flower seeds in our lawn. Ever since we have been trying to frustrate those seeds, and they in turn have sought to fulfill their destiny! The urge to be whole is in all of God's creation. A child grows as though by divine command. How fortunate when he has ways to help him grow like the Master "in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."

## HOPE FOR WHOLENESS

Faith can still make our lives whole. It would be easy to stop here. We are so given to saying that faith is the answer. But it is equally important to know what we mean when we speak of it. It isn't enough to use the word. There is no magic in it. It is rather to the experience that we must come.

And what is the meaning of faith as Jesus called it out in men? More than anything else it seems to be a great act of confidence in God. To lives where the scales were delicately balanced between faith and fear Christ spoke the word that turned the outcome to the side of confidence. It was His great gift to wavering, fractured lives. It made it possible for men who had come to a standstill to take the next step that leads to new life.

There is a very simple picture of what faith means that comes from the experience of a family. A child may go out to another home for an evening, and the father says, "When you are ready to come back, call me." In time the call comes. "I am ready to come home," And the father replies, "You start, and I'll meet you on the way." So, the child, knowing that the father's word is to be trusted, moves in faith and starts home. Of course, the father keeps his word and meets the child on the way.

It was this word that Christ brought us

*From *Poems of Edwin Markham*, Harper & Brothers, 1950. By Permission.

about God. To the life that is needing to be made whole the word of God comes, "You start and I'll meet you on the way." This is an act of confidence. This is the beginning of newness of life.

### LIVING TESTIMONY

But is it really possible? I read words the other day which surprised me, as they may surprise you. They are a living testimony to the reality of this truth. "Here I am today, an older man talking to you about the secret of spiritual power in general, when all the time what I am really seeing in my imagination's eye is that young man I was years ago, shot all to pieces, done in and shattered, foolishly undertaking too much work and doing it unwisely, all my hopes in ashes and life towering over me, saying, 'You are finished; you cannot; you are done for.' I was sunk unless I could find at least a little of what Paul had in mind, when he said, 'In Him who strengthens me, I am able for anything." Did he find it? These are the words of Harry Emerson Fosdick, known to us for his remarkable spiritual leadership and prophetic word over the years. It is a vivid and unforgettable testimony to the reality of this truth, "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

And now it must rest with you. It has well been said, "Each man's life is a citadel which no power can invade without his consent." The same Christ who spoke that distant day to a grateful man speaks also to us with all the promise of His power. May this be the time when other lives, finding new faith for tomorrow and the next tomorrows to come, shall learn how true it is, "We touch Him in life's throng and press and we are whole again."

## On Wings Like Eagles

ROBERT BRYCE SANFORD, First Methodist Church, Willows, California

*They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. — Isaiah 40:31.*

In these words, the prophet Isaiah reminds us of moods and levels of living which are familiar to all of us. We have felt moments of exaltation when we seemed to rise on wings of power very close to heaven. We have come down into the valley of adversity where we could scarcely walk without fainting.

Some who read these words might say that Isaiah had reversed his order of ideas. The prophet should have said, "They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall walk and not faint, they shall run and not be weary, they shall rise up with wings like eagles." But I think the insight of Isaiah is right.

There are always those who would make of religion a burden to be borne in expectation of a later reward. They tell us that if we walk now without fainting, we shall someday rise on wings like eagles.

### SPIRITUAL GLOW

True religion, however, is not so much a matter of looking forward to a reward as it is living in the continuing spiritual glow of the religious experiences of the past. There are times when God cuts through the fog of anxiety and ignorance in which we live and make us vividly aware of the warmth of his love, the grandeur of his truth, the sovereignty of his will. We are inspired by the touch of his Spirit and our spirits mount up with wings, like eagles. These are priceless and transforming experiences which become the fountainhead of all our living.

The test of our religion, however, is not the heights to which we soar on eagle's wings, but the way we run and the way we walk.. Can we run and not be weary? Can we walk and not faint?

There was an old man in a church I once served who told me that the Church had never had a minister who was really a Christian in his daily walk. That was a humbling thought. It is an easy thing in the ministry to rise up with eagle's wings in thrilling spiritual experience, but it is just as hard as in any other vocation, if not harder, to walk daily without fainting.

When we faint and fail in our daily walk the trouble usually lies deep within us. Isaiah said, they who *trust in the Lord* will renew their strength. When we faint in the daily walk, the trouble is less likely to be in our wills as it is in our faith. True faith is not a passive belief in things remote from daily life, but a vital power within us, keeping us true day by day to the best that we know.

### FULLER VISIONS

Christian faith is born in that transform-

g moment when we first recognize Jesus rist for what He is and resolve to put our es fully under the sway of his power. We ve Christ and open our lives to the creative tality of God. This faith, once born, is epened and broadened every time when, der the influence of the Spirit of God, we se to a fuller vision of God's love and of s will. Then we are strengthened to walk rough the temptations and run toward the portunities of daily living without faint- g and without failing.

Many couples enter marriage on eagles' ngs. It is at first a glorious experience. t soon the joy of companionship deterior- es into a burden and even to walk together the daily walk becomes almost unendur- le. It is then that "they who wait for the rd shall *renew* their strength." A marriage ich is without spiritual foundations can- t renew its strength. Under the stress of ing its breaks down and nothing can build up. First it loses its romance, then its rtesy, then its justice, and at last it be- mes a living torture which produces warp- personalities and blighted lives.

The conscientious Christian business man ters upon a new business venture with a nse of usefulness to the community and sense of well-being born of adherence to gh ideals of honesty and service. But it is t always easy to maintain the spiritual w. Customers are inconsiderate; competi- rs are unfair and pitiless; suppliers are reliable. Idealism in business begins to em out of place. Then come tempting op- rtunities to take more than is rightfully portion. Greed and dishonor stir within n. Then they who trust in the Lord shall new their strength, but they who do not ll fall.

## HIGH INTENTIONS

Many a good man has gone into politics th high intentions. The community needs form. The people need awakening. A good n leads the attack against evil and is re- rded by a public office, given as a public st. Truth seems to be coming into its own. t then the enthusiasm begins to subside. e fickle public turns its thoughts else- ere. The old evil crowd begins to creep k into positions of power. Apathy and fishness settle down over the community ain. The good man is hurt. Bitterness and spair grip his heart. Then comes the offer sell out. But he who trusts in the Lord ll *renew* his strength. He shall not faint the daily routines.

Many a fine person has undertaken the work of the church with high zeal. Full of enthusiasm to do the Lord's work, he or she has accepted a class in the church school, or an office in the woman's society, or a position on the Official Board, or a place in the choir, or has been drawn into some other activity in the life of the church. Every responsibility in the church is an opportunity to do a creative work. The high minded person is stirred by the possibilities in the church program and determines to do his job well. But difficulties arise. Those who should be equally enthusiastic are often apathetic. A hard job unselfishly undertaken deserves appreciation. Sometimes, instead, there is unkind criticism. Gossiping tongues question motives. Those who did the job differently in years gone by mutter in protest. The harmony of Christian fellowship is disturbed by those who are contrary and disagreeable. Suddenly, the high idealism of the new volunteer begins to fade and the temptation comes to throw the whole enterprise to the winds. But they who trust in the Lord *renew* their strength. They serve and are not weary in their efforts, they do not faint.

## DAILY RENEWAL

Whatever our walk in life, whatever the work we do, we need our strength renewed daily. We cannot expect that every time the going gets tough, God is going to lift us up with wings, like eagles. For most people, the creative, replenishing spiritual experiences are relatively rare. But if they are real, they have staying power. They sustain us surely in the daily affairs. Most of us live from day to day in the memory of certain primary experiences which continue to motivate our daily living. How fortunate when these experiences are creatively Christian. How disastrous when they are destructively irreligious.

There are many miserable people whose lives are lived within the dark shadows of some bitter disappointment, or some great sorrow, some intolerable insult, or some vexing frustration. Their primary motivating experiences are not life giving, but life taking. An anchor is tied to their foot which hinders them in the daily walk, which hobbles them when they run so that they soon are weary. When God would lift them up with wings, like eagles, they glance down at their weight, and the wings pass them by.

Do you desire the kind of strength which gives steadiness and perseverance in the daily walk? Then let God lift you by his

grace. Seek him often and eagerly and there will be times when He will lift you up.

The good life is the aftermath of true worship. William Temple said, "To worship is to quicken to conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God." Such experiences will change a man so that he will not walk in the same faltering way again. When God touches you deeply, He changes you.

Then whatever comes—temptation, exhaustion, opposition, or ill luck—you have something that will keep you going to the end.

## A Magnificent Failure

WESLEY P. FORD, Central Christian Church, Pasadena, California

Egypt represents man's most ancient civilization. One of the intriguing revelations that comes from that old culture is the evidence of faith in the continuance of life beyond death. In many respects, that belief was primitive; nevertheless it was real. The early Egyptians believed that man's spirit lived on beyond this life, but only if the body was preserved in order that the spirit might have a home. There was the further notion that physical elements would be needed to sustain life. Therefore, things—images that represented gods, furniture, vehicles including boats—were entombed with the mummified body. Because of the things necessary for continued existence, preparation for death was more elaborate than preparation for life.

It follows that most exacting care and elaborate preparation would be made for those occupying important posts. We had the privilege recently of visiting the Egyptian museum and there we saw some of the things that were taken from the tomb of King Tut. Literally acres of museum space are set aside to display the caskets and vaults, the furniture, the vehicles, the statues and images, and the jewelry and ornaments that were buried with that young king in order that he might have all things needed for a continuing life.

It is this belief in an on-going life that resulted in the building of the pyramids. We saw the Giza group in northern Egypt which is one of many groups of pyramids. Each is a tomb built for a particular pharaoh in order that his body, along with the necessary possessions, might be forever preserved so that his life could continue. The largest of the known pyramids is in the Giza group. It was built during the reign of Cheops for his own entombment. It is difficult to fix dates exactly, but it is known that Cheops reigned during the Fourth Dynasty and the pyramid is dated variously from 3700 to 3000 B.C.

### EVIDENCE OF PROSPERITY

Cheops ruled for twenty-three years. There is evidence that his reign was materially successful and that he had a powerful control over the people. It was customary for the pharaoh to direct the building of his own pyramid. The fact that Cheops' is the largest indicates both the degree of prosperity and authority.

The pyramid was 755 feet long on each side of the base. Erosion through hundreds of years has reduced the length slightly. It reached a height of 481 feet. It rests upon a base covering approximately thirteen acres. It is built of more than 2,300,000 blocks of stone, each with an average weight of two and a half tons. Most of the blocks are of native limestone, but the king's chamber is lined with granite slabs, each weighing up to fifteen tons. These were brought down the river for two or three hundred miles at flood time. As many as 100,000 slaves were employed and the work lasted some twenty years.

These huge stones are piled one upon the other so that they wedge together, each supporting the others. There are neither nails, bolts nor mortar. Of course, the stimulating question is, how was it accomplished? There are evidences that copper saws were used on the blocks and that drills were available. Beyond these, they had only levers, rollers and plains. The Egyptians believe that a road was built over which the stones were rolled, and that the road bed was piled with sand higher and higher as the walls went up. Thus the stones could have been rolled to the proper height.

Inside are three chambers. The largest is the Great Gallery which is 28 feet high and 155 feet long. Up toward the midway point, but off center, is the King's Chamber. At a much lower level and of lesser size and importance is the Queen's Chamber. We entered the King's Chamber by climbing the long, narrow passage. Here one must go in a stooped position, for it is only three feet and eleven inches in height. Within this room, lined with granite slabs, is the sarcophagus

which the king's body was placed. Follow- the placing of the body, the passage was cked with great stones that had been cut fit and that were dropped into place, thus ling the passage. The outer entrance was led and disguised. In connection with ery pyramid there was a temple where of- ings could continually be offered.

Because of the symmetry, the perfection its lines and its architectural grandeur, d because its building seems to defy ex- nation, many have sought to show that e big pyramid is a divinely inspired reposi- y of specially revealed truth. It has been ought of as on observatory and has been e basis of prophesy; but in spite of all n's efforts to make it something else, the pyramid is only a tomb built by slaves der the reign of a king who believed that could live forever only if his body were eserved forever. Like other huge monu- nts, it has evidences of human limitations.

## THE PLUNDERED TOMB

The fact that it was built for a tomb in way minimizes the architectural ingenuity ich has given the big pyramid splendor d significance through 5,000 years. One st stand in awe before this fascinating ectacle. Here are tons upon tons of stone t together in true measure by human nds, without the aid of machinery, and ced in such fashion that its weight is its ly support. And through the centuries it cks man's effort to build enduring cities ly to see them crumble with time. It is imated that there is enough material in e pyramid to house a city of 120,000. The thod of its building and the perfection of lines combine with its permanence to ke the big pyramid a magnificent monu- nt.

As the native guide was directing us rough the long, low passageway toward the ng's Chamber, a single question was in mind. As by the light of candles we ked into the sarcophagus and saw that it s empty, I turned to the guide and said, Where is the body of the king?" He said, was probably stolen by the Romans." Of urse, I already knew that the pyramid was empty tomb. What became of the body at the tomb was meant to preserve for- er no one knows. In the ninth century our era a Khalif spent a fortune to force try into the tomb but he found the sar- phagus empty. There are many theories; may have been entered before and its vels stolen as well as the body. And may not be that in the long span of two or three thousand year's, time wrote a verdict over the body of this king saying, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Such is time's ver- dict no matter man's cleverness.

The big pyramid from a building stand- point is magnificent, but from the stand- point of its historical purpose it is a com- plete and final failure. It was built to keep a king's body in tact forever, and now, in spite of all precautions, "Not a pinch of dust remains of Cheops." The big pyramid stands on the desert as a magnificent failure.

## CHEOPS AND ABRAHAM

Along with this pharaoh whose tomb re- mains to remind all of the ancient notion that man must carefully preserve himself and his things if he would live forever, I think of two characters in history neither of whom paid heed to this old notion. One is Abraham. The Lord said to Abraham, "Go from your country to the land I will show you." So Abraham went, as the Lord told him, to the land of Canaan. He went to a spot east of Bethel and "pitched his tent" and "built an altar to the Lord."

I do not know any more marked contrast than that of Cheops and Abraham. One was a ruler of power and might. He built a palace for himself and a tomb in which to preserve himself forever. The other was a wanderer in the wilderness seeking only to obey a Divine voice. Abraham was not poor, for he possessed cattle, silver and gold; but that which magnified himself seemed unim- portant. His building was for a different pur- pose. For himself, "he pitched a tent" and with his things "he built an altar to the Lord." Which is the path to greatness or to permanence?

The record says, "There was a famine in the land so Abraham went down to Egypt to sojourn there." What a contrast! This primitive wanderer went to the Nile valley where civilization had been developing for centuries. Already the pyramids were old. In the land of the kings, surely Abraham seemed as nothing. Yet the temples and palaces of the pharaohs are gone and their tombs are robbed and desecrated, but one cannot turn back the pages of history with- out discovering the name of Abraham.

In addition to a nation, Abraham has left for posterity the example of a great faith. By faith he went out "not knowing where." And Abraham, by the example of his life, has led more persons to adventure by faith than the books can record. And he, who for himself was satisfied with a tent while he built an altar to the Lord, stands as a re- minder that man as a spirit is more impo-

tant than the body that houses the spirit, or a magnificent tomb which houses the body.

The years have passed by Cheops and Abraham. Now let more pass along. Civilization had marked progress, but from our standpoint it was still primitive when in Nazareth a young man dedicated his life to the doing of good. He said something about turning the other cheek, about loving one's enemies, about forgiving seventy times seven. He said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth but lay up treasures in heaven." Men had too many interests in things to heed the haunting disturbing counsel of the young Nazarene. Therefore, following a mock trial, He was murdered. In strange contrast to the old way of accumulating things to insure life, He had made no provision for his body beyond death. He had prepared only for life and built neither temple nor tomb.

### CHEOPS AND CHRIST

What did Jesus Christ leave to insure his life? Nothing! The soldiers divided his garment as souvenirs and they gambled for his robe. And what of his tomb? They borrowed a tomb from a friend. He had lived by his counsel, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth but treasures in heaven." Where does one find permanence?

I suggest again that the big pyramid is a magnificent failure. No life can rest upon its accumulated fortune, nor the splendor of its tomb. There is a verdict which says of things material and earthy, even our bodies, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." So history has spoken of an ancient king in spite of his elaborate scheming to have it otherwise.

The full meaning of life evades us, but I know that God found a greater usefulness for Abraham who pitched a tent and built an altar to the Lord than for a Pharaoh who built a magnificent tomb for himself. And in mocking contrast to the method of a king who sought permanence by building and accumulating for himself, the ages have united to place the mark of eternal life upon Jesus Christ who so completely gave his all that for him they had to borrow a tomb.

## Expository Preaching and the Preacher

LESLIE CONRAD, JR., The Luther League of America, Philadelphia, Penna.

Expository preaching has what it takes to be one of the preacher's—and the pew-sitters'—best pulpit friends. The type of expository preaching we have in mind is not verse-by-verse exposition of large chunks of Scripture at a worship service. There may be a place for such Biblical exposition, but it isn't today's American Protestant pulpit.

In short, expository preaching is God's Word talking man's language in terms of 1956. It is accomplished through God's ambassador, the minister in the pulpit.

Expository preaching takes it for granted that the preacher knows his parishioners "like a book." Knowing their needs, he seeks to do something about them from the pulpit. He searches out passages of Scripture, usually two to four verses in length, that will furnish guidance and light for the hearer. Probably the most effective expository work is done on a book-by-book basis of the Bible. A series of five to eight sermons, depending on the length and preaching value of each book, is a worth-the-try procedure.

Consider the following advantages of expository preaching.

I

*Expository preaching gives the Bible back to the people.* One of the finest contributions of expository preaching for the minister is that he assists in large measure to "give the Bible back to the people"—one of the aims of the Protestant Reformers. We all know that the people have their Bibles today and, oftentimes, enough of them for a copy in every room of the house. But these same people don't know the contents of their Bibles. They are not aware that their Bibles are packed with guidance materials on the permanent issues of life. Much of the Bible is unexplored territory for most of the men and women and children in the pew, and the same is often true for the preacher in the pulpit. The ideal approach is for the preacher and his parishioners to study one book at a time, the valuable material of the scriptures together. Such an approach makes a better Bible student out of the minister, and a better brand of Bible-study pupils out of his parishioners. Both pastor and people continue to grow, sermon after sermon and year after year. It is beneficial to both.

Expository preaching brings forth a ring of authority that is so often lacking. Expository preaching is conviction preaching based on authority that flows from God's truths as found in scriptural passages under study. When an expositor, worthy of the name, enters the pulpit, there is little likelihood

at his parishioners will be thinking: "Is ere any word from the Lord, today?" They ow very well—in advance—that there will an authoritatively-based, Bible-centered rd from the Lord through his preaching vant, the pulpit expositor.

II

*Expository preaching requires the preach- to be a faithful pastor.* It is required of an positor that he also be a faithful pastor. e words of Phillips Brooks ring out clear- "The preacher who is not a pastor, grows note. The pastor who is not a preacher, ows petty. Never be content to let men thfully say of you: 'He is a preacher, but pastor'; or, 'He is a pastor, but no preach- ' Be both; for you cannot really be one less you also are the other." Expository aching is the work of the pastor-preacher rsonality. To be effective, he must be both. When the American Association of Semi- ry Professors in the Practical Fields met Chicago during June of 1954, they spent ch time putting their combined thinking wn on paper. It is of delightful interest note that their first-listed item of im- rtance was: *"Know your hearer.* Preach to present situation and thinking. Let your rmons deal with the problems he is facing his level." Expository preaching demands at the preacher do exactly what is suggest- in this recommendation. When a minister ows his hearer, it is possible for him to effective "indirect personal counseling" om the pulpit if he is cut out for this sort work. Some pulpiteers are, some aren't.

Halford E. Luccock has suggested that ere are really four trinities for a preacher keep in mind: "First, that of Father, Son d Holy Ghost; second, Abraham, Isaac and cob, representing the variety of persons in Old Testament, who come close to lives day and have an immortality in recurring man experiences; third, Peter, James and hn, representing a similar wealth of per- ns in the New Testament; and, fourth, m, Dick and Harry, a never-to-be-forgot- trinity standing for the varied people ong whom the preacher lives and to om he speaks. A man may be a formidable thodox Trinitarian in his theology and eaching, and still be curiously ineffective he forgets or denies that other trinity of m, Dick and Harry around him and in nt of him." F. W. Robertson thought that ristianity had been presented "too much theology, too little as the religion of daily e." Expository preaching which has its urce in the Bible affords many parallels to present-day experiences of parishioners. The Bible is the Book for today, tomorrow and day after tomorrow. Its message and material are timeless.

III

*Expository preaching offers variety and freshness in the pulpit.* Expository preaching, as no other type of preaching, opens the door to an inexhaustible storehouse of variety and freshness. It keeps the preacher from "running out of Gospel." It prevents a preacher from riding his favorite hobby horse themes. At the twenty-fifth anniversary of his pastorate at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, Charles H. Spurgeon opined: "If anybody had been standing in this place and preaching politics and temperance for twenty-five years, I wonder if he could have kept a congregation. All other subjects become exhausted; but give me the Bible and the Holy Ghost, and I can go on preaching forever." And, we shall add: So can the preacher of this generation if he is willing to dig!

Writing in the August 1955 issue of *Author & Journalist Magazine,* Frederic A. Birmingham directed this summary statement to freelance writers who hope to break into big-time writing: "A lot of people can write. But not many can think well enough to have something to say, or to say it uniquely . . . Valuable ingredients for the writer are: study, imagination and just thinking." These three, study, imagination and just thinking, are also very valuable ingredients for the preacher, and especially, the preacher of expository sermons. But of the three, none bulks larger than imagination. Laymen continually groan that ministers "present the same old stuff the same old way." In many, far too many cases, their groanings are true appraisals. This need not be the case if a preacher will take his cue from the great pulpitmen of the New Testament: John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter and Paul. These preachers sensed the value of employing imagination in their messages. They were familiar with their material, they knew the needs of their hearers, and they kept their eyes and ears open to their surroundings. Imaginative preaching was the result.

IV

*Expository preaching makes possible many much-desired revisions in preaching.* In my early ministry I racked up more than my share of blunders, often due to misconceptions. High on the list was my weekly re-

quirement to begin each sermon with a striking illustration, one that gripped the hearer's attention immediately. Frankly, I wasted many precious hours each week looking for the perfect attention-snatcher. Finding the right opening illustration was only part of the story; after it was in hand, it had to be whipped, and often rewhipped, into presentable form. Of course, no part of the finished manuscript received more attention in making final preparations for the actual delivery of the sermon than the opening illustration. Fortunately, "I have seen the light."

Mammy Yokum of Al Capp's famed comic strip once tacked a sign on a big tree in Dogpatch: "Meeting tonight of the *Dogpatch Ladies Brotherhood.* NO entertainment. NO refreshments. We gits right to the point ! !" Expository preaching makes it possible for the preacher to get right to the point, since both the shepherd and his flock have been feeding in the same green pasture land, on a book-by-book coverage of the Bible.

The topical sermon, admittedly, has its rightful place on the preaching agenda of sermonizers in 1956. However, it does not deserve the privileged position that it so often receives. Topical preaching is just one of the many types of preaching available to the minister. Ofter the topical preacher does not go any farther back for his material than the headlines of the afternoon newspaper, and Saturday afternoon at that, or the latest issue of his favorite magazine, or the most recent book-of-the-month. Such a procedure makes for preaching that has as much lasting influence about it as the source materials from which it is extracted. A preacher's pulpit-offerings should have day-after-tomorrow worthwhileness about them. This desirable effect can sometimes be found in topical sermons. However, it can more often be found in solid expository work.

The expository approach almost makes it impossible—or, should we say, less possible —for a minister to preach the well-tagged "Magellan sermon." The Magellan sermon, like its namesake who sailed around the globe, tries to circle the whole sea of theology every Sunday morning, steering the same old worn-out course. Unfortunately, the "passengers" are "always at sea." The sight of land is yearned for, but ever remains in the yearned-for stage. The expository sermon limits a preacher's land-and-sea coverage; he keeps within a given body of water or plot of ground. Both the pastor and the parishioners know where the property is located. In a way, the expositor may be compared to a real estate broker who knows his business, and, furthermore, who plans to stay in business. First of all, he is familiar with a given piece of property before he shows it to a potential purchaser; secondly, as he takes his hope-he-purchases buyer on tour and convinces him that the piece of property under consideration meets his particular needs.

Expository preaching shuts the door to "the apologetic" which stands ready to creep into pulpit work on less than a moment's notice. The facts of Scripture are allowed to speak for themselves. The Holy Spirit is the author. He gave the words power when they were put in written form; he can make them live — through preachers—when they are presented with meaningful assurance.

V

*Expository preaching brings much satisfaction to the preacher.* It is our opinion that the ministry can bring more satisfaction than any other profession. However, at times, most preachers will admit that they find themselves in the sandals of Elijah, running away from it all, seeking shelter under the broom tree. At times this dejected spirit stems from the fact that a minister tires of "finding something to preach about next Sunday." In such cases, it seems wise to recommend that the preacher try expository preaching. Real expository work makes for satisfaction. This satisfaction is noted in the preparation and planning stages. But, even more important, it looms large when the preacher sits down to take inventory. At the end of a month's expository work, the minister can look back with satisfaction upon the ground covered. But even greater joys are in store for the preacher who comes to the end of a long "expository ministry" in a parish. With humbled pride he can review some of the flashbacks of his ministry: "I'm happy that my ministry here was not preacher-centered; the most satisfying proof I have is our expository work. Had it been preacher-centered, there would be small lasting evidence to mark my stay with these folks. But having preached expository, they will have the meat of my messages which came from God's Word as long as they live!"